

**INDIANA ARTS COMMISSION
PUBLIC INPUT FOCUS GROUP MEETING**

March 24, 2010, 2:00 p.m.
IAC Office
100 N. Senate Avenue, Room N505

Attendees:

Carolyn Saxton	Lubeznik Center for the Arts
Shari Wagner	Poet
Lynn Kincade	Evansville Civic Theater
Steven Stolen	Indiana Repertory Theater
Joel Wendland	Indiana Repertory Theater
Kendall Smith	Art Museum of Greater Lafayette
Nancy Wood	Anderson Symphony Orchestra/Noblesville Symphony Orchestra
Deborah Stapleton	Anderson Center for the Arts
Tim Jessen	Bloomington Chamber Singers
Andrew Lee	Art With A Heart (Indianapolis)
Sharon Gamble	Phoenix Theater (Indianapolis)
JoDee Marshall	Indiana Music Educators
Elissa McDonald	Muncie Symphony
Marcy Asher	Richmond Symphony
Jim Stark	Riverrun Theater (Madison)
Mary Kramer	Art Spaces (Terre Haute)
Donna Catalano	Northwest Indiana Symphony
Alice Curry	Columbus Philharmonic
Glenn Roberts	Evansville Philharmonic
Jane Hunter	South Bend Symphony
Joyce Ribble	Private citizen

Questions, Answers, and Comments

Q: Where do the SWASOs fit in?

A: There are no changes for the SWASO category.

Q: How will regional agents be compensated?

A: They will still be receiving 12% of the amount of the grants administered.

Q: Will you open up opportunities for organizations to reclassify their grant category?

A: Yes, for instance an AOSII applicant might apply for a Majors grant if the organization meets the criteria for budget and regional impact.

Q: Will you be redefining the regions?

A: So far we plan on having the same 12 regions, but that might be reconfigured depending on who applies to be a regional agent.

Comment: We ask that reconfiguring the regions be considered because of current regional boundaries are limiting due to population considerations.

Q: What figure was used to calculate inflation?

A: The National Banking Association website.

Q: Are you going back to old-style panels?

A: All new panels will mirror the Majors panel, with neutral, non-vested panelists. There may be several panels for AOS grants.

Q: How are you going to assess the arts factor on an electronic application?

A: There are a number of ways – audio, video, still pictures – that can be linked on-line, so that organizations do not have to mail in their artistic documentation. We will be standardizing the application process for all grants.

Comment: That would be wonderful.

Q: Was there a conversation about the Majors category? (it is not mentioned in the proposed changes).

A: The Majors category has been broadened from ten grants to thirteen grants; we expect to continue to fund thirteen grants; organizations that do not win a Majors grant can cascade to an AOSII grant.

Q: In our region, the partnerships and advocacy have been huge, but how will that be maintained in a centralized system? For instance, a Regional Partner may approach a local bank for sponsorships to support the arts, but there is concern about the loss of ongoing, daily advocacy in the smaller areas. No one in Indianapolis will be going out into the state to promote for the smaller communities. I don't see that being addressed.

A: The reality is that all Regional Partners were Arts Councils before they were Partners. They were not compensated by the State of Indiana for their advocacy efforts. Will local organizations have to take up a banner that they were using State money to fly? Probably yes. It takes a baseline of money that we don't have anymore.

Q: A big concern in our region is underfunding by major foundation grants; rarely does a foundation in Indianapolis go to rural areas.

A: We have moved the balance point slightly; you benchmark yourself against other similar organizations; this will increase the dialog among similar organizations.

Comment: The orchestras at one point tried to get together, and there was a meeting but nothing happened. The orchestra industry has a wonderful opportunity. I don't benchmark myself against other state orchestras, but rather other orchestras of my budget size nation-wide. It's a wonderful asset. If the IAC could help provide list-serves, that would be a wonderful use of some pocket of money; maybe somebody could underwrite it.

Q: Whatever you do, I hope that the operating support program will be protected; it's the hardest money to come by.

A: What we've done is try to direct all of our monies into general operating support. The Commission has made a philosophical stand that, when all these cuts are happening, we're going to try to save arts organizations and artists in the State. We have to preserve the basic artistic palette in the State. Other things can grow back, but we can't lose the ship. Perhaps four or five years down the line we can de-centralize some things. We don't have money for local-oriented things in lieu of common needs like technical support. We can't address all of the concerns with efficacy.

Comment: The expectation that majors have a multi-regional influence bothers me. Being in Evansville, our mission is to reach our community, including Illinois and Kentucky. When you assess public value, you are assessing it on reaching other regions. If I send my orchestra into another region, that is a conflict, and if you're measuring how well we're reaching outside our region, to me that just doesn't make sense. We have a mission in Evansville but the State has another expectation

Q: Bartholomew County has hardly any ethnic minorities, but we are judged on how diverse is the population we reach.

A: When we panel we're looking at reaching the population that you have.

Q: We have had points taken away because they felt we weren't being diverse.

A: Standardization will help with that.

Q: What is the process going to be with independent panels? We appreciate neutral paneling but we do not have the opportunity to respond to panels.

A: We are trying to make the application process complete enough that you can make your case.

Q: Will we be applying through IAC or through our Regional Partner?

A: There will be a year of transition; you will still be applying through your Regional Partner, unless your Regional Partner is opting out of the system.

Comment: If the AOSII grants are treated with the same respect and equity that the Majors category are, it will go smoothly.

Q: The challenge with paneling is to eliminate subjectivity. Are you seeing more objectivity with the new application process?

A: That is our hope. Our Partners have done a good job at every level, but there is more temptation for subjectivity at the higher level. Our Partners have done a very good job.

Comment: It has surprised me how subjective comments and scoring have become a part of the process.

Q: We are in a two-year grant; will that change?

A: No, we will respect your grant period.

Q: The Regional concept was based on population; will population be a factor in AOSII?

A: We will try to consider that as much as possible. We do not want to go back to not having an equitable return per citizen on their investment as a taxpayer.

Q. How will this affect an area like Bloomington, where the Arts Council is no longer functioning?

A: IAC is handling all levels of grants in Region 8. Regions 8 and 12 will be opened up to new providers.

Q. The burden of documentation has increased in Region 12; this is going to price some of us out of the market.

A: Standardization will make the same baseline of information for all organizations state-side.

Q: Will you be talking to organizations about the standardization process?

A: Yes, we have pilot projects in Region 4, 8, and 12 for this very purpose before we go state-wide.

Q: As we have more questions, do we address them to our Region?

A; IAC has a blog with information posted. We will answer all questions that are posted on the blog.